



**Stage 1 Report
of the
Monroe County Latino Needs
Assessment
Task Force**

**October 2005
Bloomington, Indiana**



Introduction

Recognizing the dramatic and rapid increase in the Latino population, the Monroe County Latino Needs Assessment Task Force was established with the goal of providing an assessment of the needs, concerns and issues of this population. The Monroe County Latino Needs Assessment Task Force is a group of volunteers that emerged from the interest of social service providers and community advocates to assess and document the current status of the non-student Latino population in Monroe County, Indiana, with particular attention to those with limited English capabilities. While there have been other efforts that have given us a window into local Latino issues, such as the Service Community Assessment of Needs (SCAN) report, as well as academic and other community research projects, a detailed and all-encompassing assessment targeting this specific population has never been done.

This report reflects the first stage of the assessment project, focusing on the services available to Latinos by City/Government Officials, Education, Financial, Health, Legal, Religious, Social Service and Housing agencies. This stage gathered information from service providers on: types and frequency of interactions with limited-English-speaking Latinos, anecdotes that shed light on the nature of these

interactions, ways in which services are promoted, barriers to effective service provision, and what types of help could improve services. The second stage of the assessment will collect direct information from the Latino community. Focus groups and open-ended interviews will be used as culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment tools in order to obtain more sensitive information regarding the social, economic development, health, education, civil rights, and general status of the Latinos in Monroe County; Indiana. Several Latino community-based organizations will participate in this initiative to ensure breadth of representation.

The purpose of the Monroe County Latino Assessment is to:

1. Document the recent trends, emerging issues, needs and assets of the local non-student Latino population within their multiple contexts, with particular attention to those with limited English capabilities.
2. Identify current resources available to service agencies to bring about community awareness to better understand and identify programs and effective approaches and methods of service delivery to assist Latinos.
3. Actively engage Latinos, social service providers and advocates in the community planning



meetings and other key decision making bodies to forge together a common vision and engineer the future of our community.

The assessment team analyzed existing data to determine what information has already been compiled and which aspects will be addressed in this project. The following documents were gathered and reviewed:

1. "*Promotoras de Salud: The effectiveness of a culturally sensitive peer led intervention model for cancer prevention and control among Latina women*" by Haydee Encarnacion-Garcia, May 2004
2. "*State Policy, Regional Climates, and Local Practices for Incorporating Indiana's Newcomer Latino Youth: A Study of Educational Ecologies and Student Aspiration*" by Bradley A.U. Levinson and Judson Everitt, 2004
3. "*Health information-seeking among Spanish-speaking new comers to Bloomington: An exploratory study*" by Christina Courtright, September 2003
4. United Way SCAN Report, 2003
5. El Centro Communal Latino Outreach Focus Groups, 2002-2003
6. "*La Cara Latina de Bloomington*" (Oral History and Photography Project of Latinos in Bloomington) by Indiana University La Casa/Latino Cultural Center, 2002

In addition to the compiled information based on the research study mentioned above, we reviewed how other communities at regional and state levels are conducting similar processes, as seen in the following reports:

1. "*Latinos in Indiana: A Report to Governor Frank O'Bannon*" by the Indiana Commission on Latino/Hispanic Affairs, March 2002.
2. "*Bordering the Mainstream: A Needs Assessment of Latinos in Berwyn and Cicero Illinois*" by Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame, January 2002
3. "*The Indianapolis Hispanic Study: A Report on the Characteristics, Assets and Human Services Needs of an Emerging Population*" by United Way of Central Indiana, June 2000
4. "*Salir Adelante: A Needs and Assets Assessment of the Hispanic Community of Multnomah County*" by Latino Network, 1999

It is the aim of the Monroe County Latino Assessment Task Force to provide further information towards constructing a fully integrated and effective service provision for the Latino population in Monroe County. The results of this project will be used to:

1. Assess the challenges and issues facing those trying to outreach to the Latino community in Monroe County, Indiana.

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2. Gain knowledge for the creation of a fully integrated and effective service provision plan for the Latino population in Monroe County, Indiana.
 3. Formulate recommendations for actions that will help to improve the quality of life of the Latino community in Monroe County, Indiana.
 4. Contribute to the overall improvement of the Monroe County/Bloomington community by stimulating action towards addressing the concerns identified relative to the vulnerability of the Latino population in Monroe County.

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It's sobering to think of the millions of people today and in the past who've lived in a state of exile. It almost seems like part of the human condition.
—John Clower





U.S. Census Data for Hispanics / Latinos, 1990 and 2000

	United States		Indiana		Monroe County		Bloomington	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Hispanic origin (of any race)	22,354,059	35,305,818	98,788	214,536	1,367	2,235	993	1,722
% of population	9.0%	12.6%	1.8%	3.5%	1.3%	1.9%	1.6%	2.5%
% increase 1990-2000		57.9%		117.2%		63.5%		73.4%
Foreign-born from Latin America	7,841,650	16,086,974	15,342	77,457	215	564	204	504
% increase 1990-2000		105.1%		404.9%		162.3%		147.1%
Spanish spoken at home by persons over 5 years old	17,339,172	28,101,052	90,146	185,576	1,517	2,455	1,132	1,888
% increase 1990-2000		62.1%		105.9%		61.8%		66.8%
Of these, who speak English "not well" or "not at all"	4,504,033	13,751,256	31,276	84,355	278	681	205	526
% increase 1990-2000		205.3%		169.7%		145.0%		156.6%



Assets:

Summary of progress made in serving the Latino community

General services — government agencies


Four years ago, the City of Bloomington created a bilingual staff position at its Community and Family Resources Department (CFRD) so that someone can always provide direct services to the Spanish-speaking population or help them locate services that are not part of the City. This position has been key in the development of individual and networked community solutions to needs as the Latino community keeps growing. CFRD currently coordinates over 30 volunteers throughout a variety of areas, and has begun translating all of the City's most frequently used documents, forms, and publications into Spanish. Thanks to ongoing efforts by a wide range of city and county agencies, many useful documents are already in Spanish, and city employees such as rental housing inspectors carry Spanish-language written and audio information with them when visiting homes. The City maintains a bilingual Web site, bloomingtonlatino.net, that points both clients and agency staff toward useful services and recent news. Public agencies throughout the city and county also have bilingual signs with the CFRD telephone number for clients who need Spanish-

language assistance. Many city and county agencies, including the Police and Fire departments, have staff available who can assist Spanish-speaking clients, or are able to call upon interpreters on an as-needed basis. CFRD participates actively in coordination efforts that link public and private agencies throughout the county.

The Monroe County Public Library has recently hired bilingual staff, expanded its collection of Spanish-language books, videos, and informational pamphlets, and is actively encouraging visits by Spanish-speakers.

General services — non-government agencies

Local non-profits have participated in countywide coordination efforts and often have either a bilingual staffperson or access to some interpreting assistance. Particularly notable have been efforts by the St. Paul Catholic Center, which conducts extensive outreach in Spanish including sponsorship of a variety of social groups, and celebrates mass and sacraments in Spanish. For the past several years, St. Paul's has also spearheaded monthly coordination meetings among public and private agencies



who serve the Spanish-speaking community. Several of those interviewed remarked that they had received referrals from other agencies, thereby improving their effectiveness and broadening their outreach, or had referred Latino clients to others based on contacts made during countywide coordination efforts. Several organizations have sprung up over the past five years that focus primarily on serving and/or involving Latinos in the community.

Education

For several years, the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) maintained a full-time multicultural outreach staffperson. Through direct outreach to families, translation and interpreting services, assistance in practical everyday tasks, and group literacy activities, the county has made a great effort to improve participation by Limited-English-proficiency (LEP) students and their families in the educational system. Parents of school-age children encounter a wealth of further resources when they enroll their children in school. In addition, and in partnership with other community agencies, MCCSC offers adult education classes which include English as a Second Language, homework help, computer training, and GED preparation; it is also a partner in an interagency Spanish adult literacy program (Plaza Comunitaria). At the

university level, La Casa Cultural Center not only serves Latino university students, but also offers training and resources to agencies who want to improve their outreach and services, encourages Latino high school students to attend college, and involves university students in service learning programs that benefit LEP Latinos. Educational programs from Head Start all the way through Indiana University have shown a commitment to facilitating participation by LEP Latinos.

Health

Many clinics that serve a significant number of Spanish-speaking patients have bilingual staff or volunteer interpreters, as well as Spanish-language materials. It is particularly gratifying to see a full-time certified interpreter at the health center that is most used by low-income residents. Preventive outreach has also improved – incentives such as telephone cards and gift vouchers have been used successfully in outreach efforts around HIV testing in the community.

Overall

There is an informal network of Latino leaders and other agency representatives who are aware of services available to Latinos and the issues affecting LEP Latinos' daily lives. Many agencies have joined these networks and are getting vital information, and in turn Latinos are

better served and integrated to the community. The number of bilingual staff and volunteers has increased, which in turn has improved organizations' outreach and effectiveness. A good number of agencies have already translated or plan to translate their basic brochures and materials. Outreach programs through interagency partnerships have been innovative

and effective. Particularly noticeable is a widespread attitude among both public and private service providers that the growth in the Spanish-speaking population in Monroe County represents an asset and a challenge rather than a burden, and to that end many agencies have sought additional funding to meet that challenge.

I have been impressed with the work that a small community such as Bloomington has made to help the Spanish-speaking community here. Several of my families are here because there is work available and they are receiving community support. They feel comfortable, even when faced with barriers such as language and negative stigmas.

—Healthy Families/Parent Aid

We have seen an enormous commitment from families. Families or individuals stop by to say hello, bring food and feel a sense of community.

—Project FLAME





Difficulties:

Summary of problems encountered by public and private agencies


General services — government agencies

Several sources have mentioned lack of awareness on the part of Latinos with limited English proficiency (LEP) about the availability and nature of government services that might be helpful to them. In addition, even if resources are known, many are fearful or reluctant to use services or to interact with officials, even when necessary. Officials who are approached in both everyday or urgent-need situations may not be able to communicate adequately with Spanish-speakers. During interactions with agency staff, clients may say they understand when in fact they might not. Cultural differences impact communications in both small and large ways, from hand gestures to child-rearing customs. Clients may also have difficulty filling in forms which may be long, complicated, and/or hard to understand, and may receive official correspondence in English that they cannot understand. It is hard to set up an evaluation or feedback mechanisms to improve services to limited-English proficient clients. There is also a lack of sufficient forms, brochures, manuals, pamphlets, and signage in Spanish.

At the same time, even when Spanish-language materials are available, not all staff use them advantageously. In addition, not all staff or agencies are aware of what services others offer, so that clients are not always adequately referred or referrals are not made at all. Some agencies do not have dedicated bilingual staff, so that anyone in the office who knows Spanish will end up doing the work of others and neglecting his/her own area at times. A widespread concern is the lack of funding for in-house bilingual staff as well as a shortage of trained, organized, and available bilingual volunteer interpreters and translators in the community.

General services — non-government agencies

Although Spanish-speakers may be less fearful about turning to non-governmental agencies, there is still a reluctance to approach strangers for help, and a general lack of awareness of all services and helps available. Not all agencies have ready access to bilingual services, either in-house or in the form of a corps of trained volunteers. Not all agencies are aware of how to use interpreters effectively. Even if they have adequate bilingual support, staff at several non-governmental



agencies expressed concern about how best to get the word out about their services, whether by word of mouth or by printed materials. Information about programs is not readily available to all who need or who offer help. There are problems with physical access to services, particularly given the limitations of the city bus service and the lack of night services or phone referrals; and legal access may be denied to those who do not have proper documentation. LEP Latinos also need to have ways to be more organized as a group; Latino men in particular have few ways to find the support they need. In general, there needs to be more cross-cultural contact and understanding in the community.

Education

In terms of children's education, a basic difficulty in this area is communicating with parents, as barriers may be more than language but also cultural in nature. Thus, problems include both bilingual staff/volunteers and cultural training for educational staff. Spanish-speaking parents face a number of obstacles to working successfully with the educational system, including difficulties in reading printed matter sent home in English, finding time and/or transportation to attend meetings with educators, fear of people in official positions, fear of rejection because of legal status, and the inadequacy of interpreting by their

own children. When a parent has found a staffperson s/he can trust and communicate with successfully, s/he is often reluctant to consult others who might also be able to help.

Adults who wish to study English or other subjects have problems with transportation and time as well, and classes are not generally offered at schedules convenient to all.


Students graduating from high school without adequate legal documentation cannot go on to public colleges and universities at in-state tuition rates.

Financial sector

There is mistrust of the banking system due to communication limitations, cross-cultural misunderstandings, and lack of outreach and staff in banks; LEP Latinos may also face the structural problem of lack of proper identification.

Health

LEP Latinos often go straight to the emergency room for a non-life-threatening problem without realizing that it is more costly and usually entails a longer wait than other outpatient services. Most have no health insurance, and employers do not always cover on-the-job accidents. There is not enough affordable health care available to low-income people, and clients often



need help in setting up payment plans when costs are incurred. Many Spanish-speakers are not aware of available low-cost services, so many avoid seeking care at all unless the problem is very serious. Much of people's knowledge of health care is through word of mouth, and personal networks may or may not carry accurate or complete information, depending upon whom one knows. HIV/AIDS affects Latinos disproportionately, and providers note that there is not enough general health awareness in the community.

There is no Spanish-language AA group in Bloomington, and mental health services are inadequate for Spanish-speakers. In clinical situations, staff note that it is often difficult to establish rapport with Spanish-speakers, particularly in stressful situations such as childbirth or emergencies; this is primarily for language reasons but cultural barriers may also interfere. Providers may have Spanish-language discharge and other educational materials, but may not know how effective they are after patient leaves the clinic or hospital. If intake sheets are in Spanish, then staff may not always be able to understand what patients write in the forms. Patients need help in setting up appointments or conducting other business by telephone; trained interpreters are not always available. Both providers and patients may not know how to handle interpreters adequately, including issues of ethics


and privacy rules. Particularly problematic is if family members interpret in a medical situation.

Housing

Many Spanish-speakers do not have sufficient legal documentation and credit records to fulfill landlord requirements, get a mortgage, or even benefit from Habitat for Humanity housing. Because of low income, many live in overcrowded apartments. Landlords are not always able to communicate adequately with their tenants to process applications, explain restrictions and obligations, or to schedule necessary maintenance and inspections. Both cultural and language barriers are involved. Safety and other crucial information for tenants is not often available in Spanish. Tenants and prospective home-buyers are not always aware of the resources available to them, and may not know how to identify and avoid predatory practices.

Legal

Many Spanish-speaking newcomers in Monroe County do not have enough acceptable identification to obtain driver's licenses, which leads to arrests or tickets for driving without a license; it also means that they cannot obtain enough legal identification to conduct other transactions in the county. Many do not realize how formal the judicial system is, and that they can be arrested for failure to appear in court



or failure to comply with conditions of probation. Many do not know what to do when arrested, what their rights are, and how to post cash or surety bonds. Even paying a ticket is hard to understand. Those who are arrested often fail to understand how seriously the U.S. legal system views driving under the influence, or that the legal system metes out cumulatively more severe punishments for repeated offenses. Overall, the principal legal problems are structural (need to drive but can't do so legally) and of awareness (how the legal system works).

Work

Problems on the job are principally difficulties in communication, for both language and cultural reasons. There is also not enough information available on health and safety issues in Spanish, whether written or spoken. Information on availability of jobs is mostly communicated by word of mouth, which often limits the sphere of possibility for those with limited English abilities. If employers pay in cash, employees cannot produce proof of income for conducting transactions that require this; employers often do not even pay the minimum wage, and workers do not know their rights or, if they do, are fearful of demanding them.

Overall

Language barriers are still widespread in Monroe County. On the one hand, this is due to the newness of the Spanish-speaking population and the difficulties they encounter in terms of time and resources to learn English adequately. On the other hand, there are not enough bilingual resources available in three key areas: printed and audiovisual materials, staff at agencies and organizations, and a body of trained interpreters and translators in the community.

Cultural barriers also exist, as many local residents and agency staff do not have enough experience and training to help people from other countries who do not speak English fluently. This leads, on the one hand, to fear and mistrust on the part of potential clients in seeking services that are in fact available to them, and on the other hand, to frustration and even hostility on the part of English-speaking residents and staff. Cultural miscommunication can also lead to grievous mistakes.

Awareness of both how to find services and "how things work" is a big problem for those with limited English and local experience. But awareness is also a problem for staff at agencies and organizations, as not everyone knows what is available in the community to strengthen their own services or to refer clients to



another place. Thus, there is still room for improvement in networking and coordination among service providers.

Resources and staffing are also mentioned as a recurring problem. Even when bilingual resources exist, they may not be utilized most effectively and efficiently, or they may not have adequate training to meet ethical or linguistic requirements. Agency staff repeatedly referred to the lack of a general corps of interpreters and translators who could step in and provide help in various areas when needed.

Finally, many Latinos with limited English proficiency lack the financial resources and legal documentation necessary to participate fully in employment, educational, housing, health care, and other opportunities available to the rest of the local population. For example, workers may be offered jobs but cannot get a driver's license or access to quality bus service; the result may be legal difficulties, excessive expense, or health problems. These are structural problems that local agencies cannot resolve by themselves, but must be taken into account because they tend to have repercussions in many spheres of life.

Staff and clients don't know each other's cultural norms (the way people interact, gestures and body language) and this can cause misunderstandings.
—Focus group of City employees

The caller becomes frustrated that we cannot understand what they are trying to communicate and that makes whatever their situation is all that much worse.
—Police dispatcher





Recommendations

All agencies interviewed provided feedback on ways to improve their own ability to access and serve the LEP Latino population in Monroe County. Based on this information, these recommendations were created by and for service providers. This section of the report should inspire future programs and collaborative efforts within our community to improve the lives of LEP Latinos.

Language Accessibility

Suggestions to improve language accessibility are two-fold. In addition to further increasing the number of Spanish speaking staff members and volunteers, service providers agreed that creating a local directory of trained volunteer and professional interpreters (medical, legal, and general expertise) would help to alleviate the language accessibility problem.

Employee Training

Staff members are at the core of every agency's success and their active participation in trainings can be a very powerful way of improving services overall. We recommend the following training topics: how to use an interpreter, cultural sensitivity, basic Spanish phrases, and how to make informed client referrals.

Translated Materials

Based on the unanimous responses from all participating sectors, the proper translation of a greater quantity and range of documents and signs would help to alleviate the language barrier. Because of the wide variety of service providers, the documentation is varied in form as well; registration sheets, Q&A forms, signs, directories, applications...are all hurdles for the LEP Latino population.

Outreach

In response to the difficulty experienced when trying to access LEP Latinos, we recommend advertising in Spanish and conducting outreach in the community using volunteers from within the Spanish-speaking population. Much valuable information is passed by word of mouth among LEP Latinos, so agencies should encourage clients to "pass it on".

Educational Workshops

Housing, Public Service, Social Service, and Financial sectors recommended community workshops created to educate LEP Latinos about the services available to them. Building on this idea, we recommend collaborating with leaders in the Spanish-speaking

community to help create and conduct such educational workshops and to make them more accessible to the LEP Latino population.

Interagency Communication

It is now evident that the participating sectors highlighted in this report face similar issues. We recommend forming focus groups made up of representatives from local agencies to share experiences, concerns and suggestions. In addition, those agencies who are not yet part of an ongoing coordination network to serve LEP Latinos are encouraged to become involved; a regular email newsletter would also be useful. Communication and information sharing between

agencies and sectors of the community will make future efforts at improving the lives of LEP Latinos much more comprehensive.

Community Responses

Finally we recommend conducting informal community workshops that focus on cultural sensitivity and immigrant rights. Recognizing that service providers also reach other sectors of the community, it is important to use that opportunity to raise overall awareness in the community of the issues that immigrants face on a daily basis to increase understanding and cultural awareness.

Q: What kind of help would be useful to you and your organization to improve services?

A: Access to a very organized group of accessible interpreters and translators (especially for medical and legal services).

A: Strengthening our ties with those programs in the community that are actively involved with the Latino community and having those organizations know of our services and provide adequate information.

—Two of the most common answers





List of agencies and organizations interviewed for this report

City of Bloomington

City Hall Front Desk
Community and Family Resources Department
Employee Services Department
Fire Department
Housing and Neighborhood Development
Human Rights Commission
Parking Operations
Parks & Recreation
Police Department
Utilities Department

Education

Head Start
Indiana University, La Casa Cultural Center
Indiana University, Residential Programs & Services Apartment Housing
Ivy Tech State College
Latino Family Resource Center
MCCSC Adult Education
MCCSC Office of Multicultural Education and Services
Templeton Elementary School
VITAL

Legal/Law Enforcement

City of Bloomington Police
Court services (interpreting)
Fuller Bail Bonds
Indiana Legal Services
Indiana State Police
Monroe County License Bureau
Monroe County Probation/Community Corrections
Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program

Health Care

Bloomington Hospital Emergency Department
Bloomington Hospital Ob/Gyn Clinic



Center for Behavioral Health
CHAP clinic
Community Eye Care Center
Dental Care Center
Planned Parenthood
Positive Link
Promptcare
Wal-Mart Vision Center

Other non-profit agencies and organizations

Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Catholic Social Services
Community Kitchen
Habitat for Humanity
Healthy Families/Parent Aid
Middle Way House/The Rise
Monroe County Office of the Division of Family and Children
Monroe County Public Library
Monroe County United Ministries
Mujeres en Conexión
St. Paul's Catholic Center
St. Vincent de Paul
University Ministries

Private sector

Apartment Association of Indiana
Bank One
Century 21 Realty Group
Chamber of Commerce
Fifth Third Bank
Monroe Bank

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